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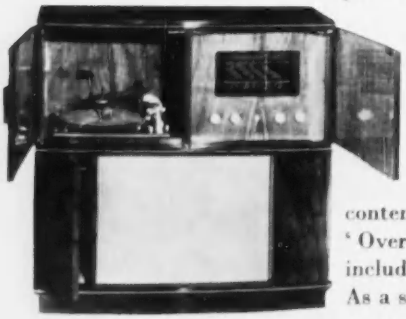

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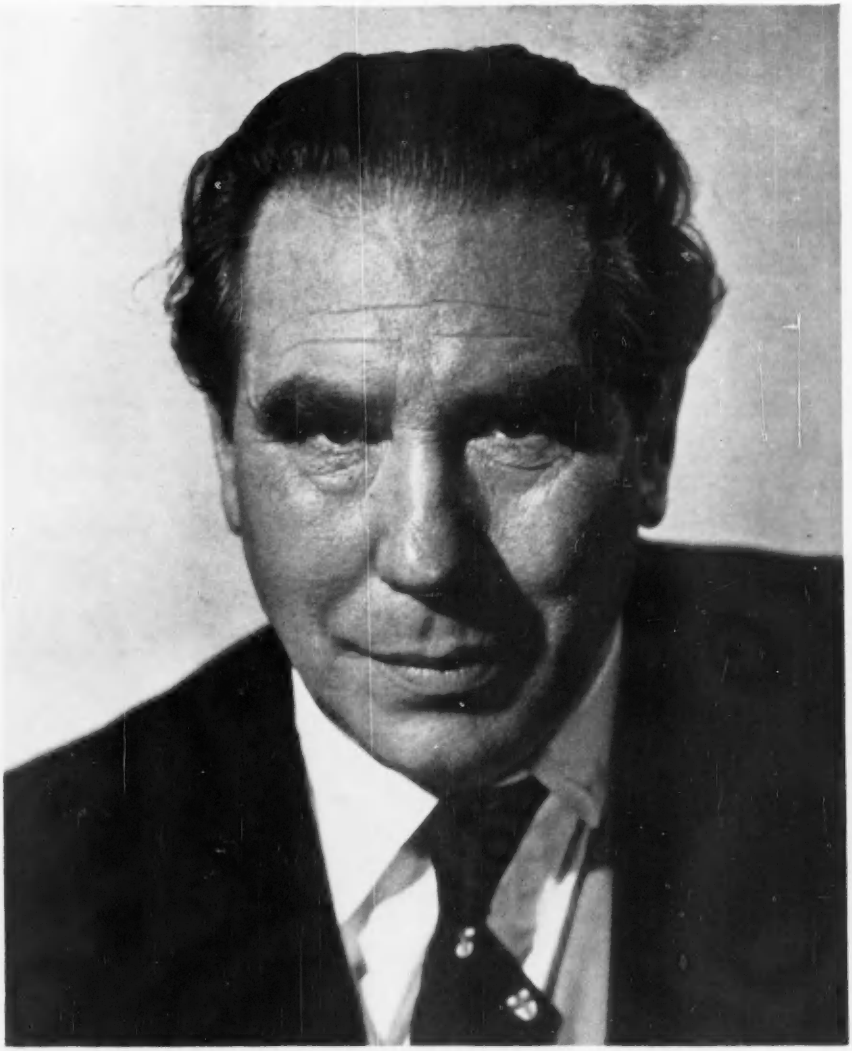
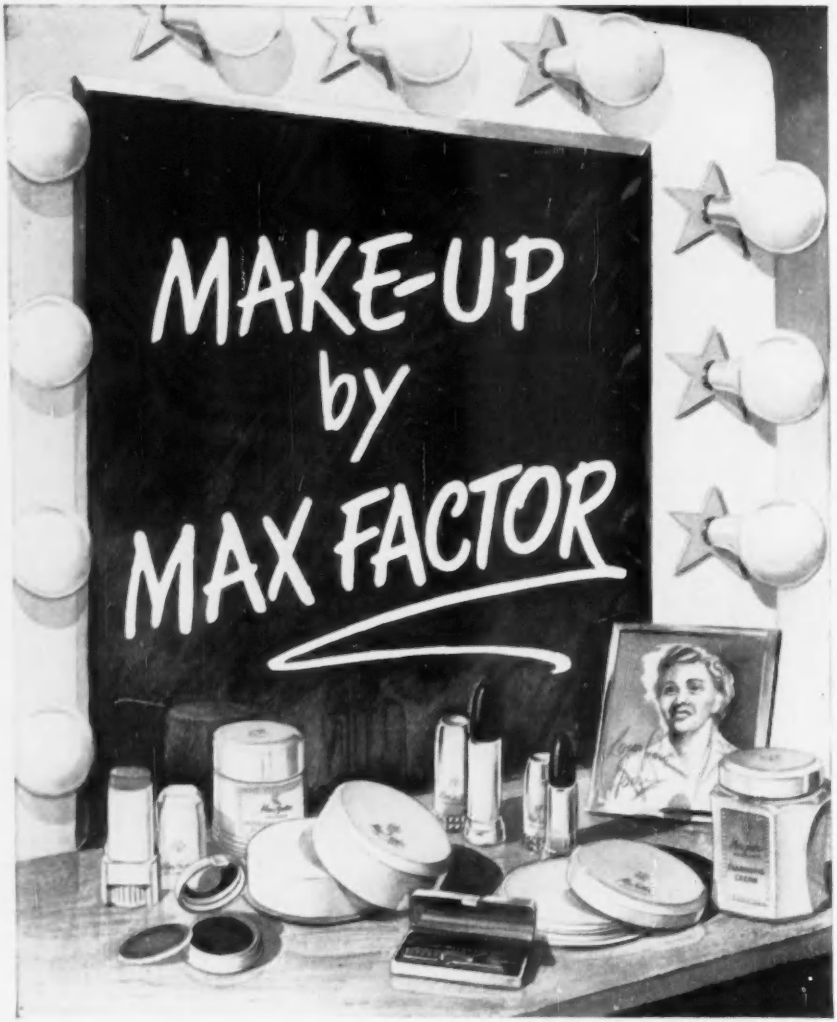


Donald Wolfit

has returned to the West End after several years in a highly dramatic role in "The Strong are Lonely," a play by Fritz Hochwalder, set in the College of the Jesuit Fathers in Buenos Aires in 1767. Mr. Wolfit himself plays the part of the Father Provincial of the Jesuits, and the play is produced by Margaret Webster with settings by Rolf Gerard. "The Strong are Lonely," which is adapted by Eva le Gallienne, opened at the Piccadilly for a season of four weeks only on 15th November, having made a deep impression during its provincial tour.

(Portrait by Bert Cann)



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Over the Footlights

TWO new serious plays which have reached the West End since we closed for press last month, are worthy of the highest praise, and should be seen. They are *The Queen and the Rebels*, which we feature fully this month, and *The Strong are Lonely*, also reviewed this time, which is at the Piccadilly until 10th December only. Each is provocative and dramatic, and more than welcome in these lean times.

The Iron Curtain has received a severe jolt following the arrival of the enchanting Moiseyev dancers at the Empress Hall, and the recent visit to the Palace of the Classical Theatre of China. We, on our side, await news of the reception accorded our own players in *Hamlet*, during their historic visit to Russia, and there cannot but be rejoicing that the aforesaid Curtain is now no barrier to the interchange of the arts.

Apart from the Christmas shows detailed in this page, several important new productions will reach London in the next few weeks. They include *Anniversary Waltz*, already at the Lyric, and Ibsen's *Wild Duck*, with which John Clements begins his Classical Season at the Saville on 21st December. Included in the cast are Emlyn Williams, Dorothy Tutin, Angela Baddeley, George Relph, Michael Gough, Laurence Hardy, Charles Carson, Robert Beaumont and Peggy Livesey. Murray Macdonald directs this fine company and the décor and costumes are designed by Laurence Irving. *The Shadow of Doubt*, in which Mr. Clements is still starring, will, it is hoped, transfer to another theatre.

THE CHRISTMAS SHOWS

"**Dick Whittington on Ice**"—Empress Hall, 10th December.
"**Listen to the Wind**"—Arts, 16th December.
Bertram Mills Circus—Olympia, 20th December.
"**Cinderella**"—Palace, 21st December.
"**Charley's Aunt**"—Globe, 22nd December.
"**Noddy in Toyland**"—Princes (matinees only), 22nd December.
"**Peter Pan**"—Scala, 23rd December.
"**The Famous Five**"—Princes (evenings only), 23rd December.
"**Puss in Boots**"—Fortune, 24th December.
Tom Arnold's Circus—Harringay, 24th December.
"**Where the Rainbow Ends**"—Festival Hall, 26th December.
Harry Corbett and Sooty — Adelphi (matinees only), 26th December.
"**Hansel and Gretel**"—Sadler's Wells, 23rd December (three special matinees on 31st Dec., 7th and 14th Jan.)

A newcomer in the way of Christmas plays will be *Listen to the Wind*, at the Arts Theatre. Written by Angela Ainley Jeans, with music and lyrics by Vivian Ellis and directed by Peter Hall, this will be virtually the same production which had such a successful try-out at Oxford last year.

A new revue, *Such is Life*, starring Al Read, will follow *The Talk of the Town* at the Adelphi on 14th December, and *Fresh Airs*, the new Laurier Lister revue, comes to the Royal Court on 12th January. It is hoped to transfer *Suspect*, starring Flora Robson, to another theatre. The new musical, *A Girl Called Jo*, with Joan Heal and Dennis Quilley, based on Louisa Alcott's famous novel "Little Women," comes to the Piccadilly on 15th December.

F.S.

Cover Portrait: Irene Worth in *The Queen and the Rebels*.

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New Shows Reviewed

"The Queen and the Rebels"
(Haymarket)

UGO BETTI'S play has both strongly dramatic content and interesting ethical implications.

On the surface a highly theatrical story of a "frontier incident," in which a prostitute is mistaken by revolutionary forces for a fugitive Queen, who they fear may provide a rallying point for the people and must therefore be liquidated, *The Queen and the Rebels* is primarily a plea for the sanctity of the individual. In it we see how Argia, a woman of the streets, finds, like Mary of Magdala, a new dignity of spirit when her worthless life acquires a meaning and a purpose. By the very fact that the rebels mistake her for the Queen she is inspired to behave like a Queen, and sustained even to the bitter end.

The hypothetical political background is a familiar one in our day and generation, but Betti appears to sit on the fence. If the revolutionaries are drawn either as cold-blooded fanatics or opportunists, the real Queen is portrayed as a pawn in the game and quite unfitted to lead the people. Argia, on the other hand, emerges as a kind of saviour figure, in her final personal struggle fundamentally withdrawn from the conflict of "the kingdoms of this world."

Henry Reed's translation is taut and effective and Frank Hauser has produced the play with fine dramatic intensity. The two central characters, Argia and Amos, the Commissar, are brilliantly portrayed by Irene Worth and Leo McKern. Miss Worth gives a performance that will long be remembered. Her timing is perfect and her conception of Argia intuitively faultless. Another most convincing performance is that of Gwendoline Watford as the hunted Queen, and John Kidd, as the Porter, who in his quiet way gives inspiration to Argia, is another actor who brings sincerity to his part. E.S.

"**The Good Soldier Schweik**"—Theatre Royal, Stratford E., 25th October.
"**The Queen and the Rebels**"—Haymarket, 26th October.
"**The Short Spring**"—New Lindsey, 27th October.
"**The Winter's Tale**"—Old Vic, 1st November.
"**La Plume de ma Tante**"—Garrick, 3rd November.
"**Meet me on the Corner**"—Hippodrome, 4th November.
"**Komuso**"—Arts, 8th November.
"**Summertime**"—Apollo, 9th November.
"**Suspect**"—Royal Court, 10th November.
"**The Strong are Lonely**"—Piccadilly, 15th November.

"The Short Spring" *(New Lindsey)*

THIS comedy by Toni Block, author of the successful *Flowers for the Living*, opened on 27th October. It has an interesting theme, being occupied in discovering the real character of a dead author of repute. This, of course, calls to memory Mr. A. A. Milne's *The Truth about Blayds*, and the present play is not so convincing as that play was. The idea is not developed quite quickly enough, and the dialogue,

"The Short Spring"

A scene from the new satirical comedy by Toni Block recently seen at the New Lindsey. In the picture *L. to R.* are Anthony Beckley, Angus Neill and Michael Duffield.

(Picture by Russell Jarvis Ltd.)

rather flat at times, is continued after the secret of the dead writer has been revealed and our interest has gone.

The characters, none very credible or complete in themselves, were greatly helped by the acting of Miss Hilda Braid, Miss Joan Duan, Mr. Michael Duffield and Mr. Angus Neill. H.G.M.

"The Winter's Tale" *(Old Vic)*

MICHAEL Benthall's production lacked the perfect integration of the Gielgud revival a few years back at the Phoenix, and must inevitably be compared to its disadvantage. But there is an undoubted warmth and simplicity of approach in Mr. Benthall's new production which has its own appeal. And, above all, must be mentioned the brilliantly colourful décor by Peter Rice which is a joy to the eye, both in the court scenes in Sicilia and in the countryside of Bohemia.

Paul Rogers is an impassioned Leontes whose jealousy is not the cold inward piece of suffering portrayed by John Gielgud. As Hermione, Wendy Hiller, who delivers her lines on occasions with odd intonations, lacks the dignity one would have expected, and in the early scenes might indeed have given her husband cause for suspicion. Margaret Rawlings was a full-blooded Paulina, irresistible in her single-mindedness. Of the other members of the cast Charles Gray was a handsome and dignified figure as Polixenes, and Zena Walker brought youthful charm to Perdita. Dudley Jones as the Old Shepherd also made a most favourable impression. John Neville's Autolycus, played "spiv" fashion, seemed a little out of period, but the audience loved him. F.S.

"La Plume de ma Tante" *(Garrick)*

M. ROBERT Dhery's revue, which opened on 3rd November, is devised for delight. Nobody is mocked, nothing is topical and we do not have to think. With amiable inconsequence, more or less lunatic fantasies are bodied forth with astonishing skill and seldom fail to beguile us. Here is the efficiency that parades inefficiency, that spotlights dimness and underlines the inadequate.

M. Dhery introduces his show with friendly appeal, as a person with anxiety under control. Mlle. Colette Brosset is an understudy, we must make allowances. M. Jacques Legras wears a look of patient suffering. When things go wrong or lions roar in the wings, the company refuse to be rattled, they assume that we, too, are human and, therefore, will understand.

Pilar Lopez

the famous Spanish dancer, who returned with her company to the Palace Theatre for a four-weeks season on 14th November. There are two changes of programme and the company was well received at the opening performance, particularly during the second half when there was some outstanding virtuoso dancing from Paco de Ronda, the leading male dancer, and from Antonio Montoya, whose speed and precision was enthusiastically acclaimed. In addition to Pilar Lopez herself, Elvira Real also danced delightfully, and the only disappointment was the obvious shortcomings on the production side, in particular the lighting of several of the ballets.

When they manage to float free of mishap and stage a set piece of whatever genre, with what consummate artistry is it performed. The judgment of time and force is perfect and all is apparently natural and effortless.

Mime plays a large part in the entertainment. We are shown how Adam and Eve reacted to forbidden fruit; love chased out and around a cottage; a late diner in a small cafe; two gentlemen trapped behind the valvular entrance to a public convenience; these were among the pieces which

Max Bygraves
who is starring in the new show at the Hippodrome, has become one of our most popular comedians. Last Christmas he made a big hit as Sammy in "Mother Goose," the Palladium pantomime.

were properly rounded off. So also was the bull-fight in which Mlle Nichole Parent gave a striking performance as the torero. Mlle. Colette Brosset's gift of burlesque was always adroitly revealed, as if without intention. Of the company generally, the men seemed very French and the girls very English. These young ladies transcend the bounds of glamour and abide in a realm of glory. Much of the performance would have seemed, one suspects, unfunny in English hands, if not offensive. Somehow, a kind of modesty seems to characterise the presentation. H.G.M.

"Meet Me on the Corner" *(Hippodrome)*

THIS new revue, which is directed by Charles Henry and produced by Val Parnell, would be exceedingly thin without the personal charm of Max Bygraves, and perhaps three other items. These include Channing Pollock, a conjuror with a difference whose skill is sheer artistry. Mr. Pollock, a most debonair figure, conjures only with white doves and playing cards, but every moment of his act is absorbing and mystifying. Latona, Graham and Chadel in the turn called "Teddy Boys" reveal themselves as unusually daring acrobats, and the Nitwits crazy band provide many funny moments. But the final—and lengthy—item of the programme, called "Max Tells the Palladium Story," had no justification whatever unless it was the blatant plugging of a sister show. F.S.

"Komuso" *(Arts)*

THIS play by Robert Nichols, a poet of the First World War, who died in 1944, bears on his experiences in Japan in the early 'twenties, when he held the Chair of English at the Imperial University of Tokyo. *Komuso* has been broadcast with good effect, but seen on the stage the play seemed strangely dated, the sentiment often bordering on bathos.

The Arts production, by Guy Verney, was sincerely done, and no effort was spared, particularly in Paul Mayo's setting, to convey the mysterious atmosphere which haunts the abandoned Buddhist temple, now the home of Dr. and Karin Ballentine, an English scientist and his young wife, which is the scene of the action. Peter Copley and Honor Blackman played these parts with great intensity, and Michael Warre contributed a full-blooded character study as Augustus Peach, the odd, thwarted character who drinks himself to death, but proves to be Karin's soul mate, in terms of nirvana. Paul Eddington as Fytton, the restless aviator-seducer, who brings disaster to Karin, stepped right out of Charles Garvice or Marie Corelli, as did Marie Burke as the incredible Polish crystal gazer. Nichols' philosophy had little chance beneath all these romantic trappings. F.S.

"Summertime" *(Apollo)*

THE new comedy at the Apollo is the third work by the late Ugo Betti, the season's most fashionable playwright, to reach the West End, and if it is something of a disappointment after *The Burnt Flower Bed* and *The Queen and the Rebels*, there are few dramatists who have been equally successful in both fields.

However, in spite of some arid moments, particularly in the first act, *Summertime* contains a great deal of wit and charm. It has been imaginatively directed by Peter Hall, and though the settings by James Bailey are not very evocative of Italy, they are in their pale way quite attractive.

Geraldine McEwan (Francesca) makes a delightful and touching heroine, but Dirk Bogarde as Alberto, the object of her love, fails to create anything but a callow and heartless youth. Gwen Ffrangcon Davies's clever performance as the talkative aunt

(Continued on page 16)

Argia: I have never done a stroke of work in my life. I have always had a very large number of servants at my disposal.

A moment from the opening scene of the play, which takes place in a large hall in the main public building in a hillside village near the frontier. Raim (Duncan Lamont) is interrogating a number of travellers, who have been forcibly held up at this remote spot by the revolutionary forces; among them Argia (Irene Worth, *centre*).

"The Queen and the Rebels"

Pictures by Angus McBean

● **UGO BETTI'S dramatic play, which is presented at the Haymarket Theatre by Henry Sherek, has made a deep impression on London theatregoers. The play, translated by Henry Reed, is reviewed earlier in this issue, and is directed by Frank Hauser with scenery designed by Audrey Cruddas. Irene Worth, who made her last London appearance at the same theatre in *A Day by the Sea*, gives a performance likely to rank among the most outstanding of the year.**

Raim: Look, Argia: you're not only a dead weight on me . . . It's not only that. You've begun to get rather too many wrinkles for my liking . . .

Left alone, Argia, a prostitute from the neighbouring town, reveals that she had made the journey specially to find Raim. He, however, is far from pleased to see her.

Raim: And the wonderful thing is that the beef-steak eaters are always the same people. They may *look* different, of course. But who are they?
Traveller: The bosses. . . .

Raim indulges in some rather indiscreet talk with one of the travellers, only to discover later that he is Commissar Amos of the Revolutionary Party (Leo McKern, *right*).

Left: *Argia*: I suppose in the country you don't go in for this sort of thing? I have to, every night. I'm not so young as I was, I've just been told.

It has been given out that the revolutionaries are looking for the Queen, who has been in hiding for five years following an abortive attempt on her life—hence the hold-up of the travellers. Argia and a peasant woman in the party are left together for the night.

Argia: Did what that brute in here say about the Queen frighten you? You mustn't take any notice of that. It's nothing to do with us.

When she looks into the peasant woman's face Argia suddenly realises that this poor frightened creature is the Queen. Her first thought is to take advantage of the amazing discovery. She rushes to get Raim. (Gwendoline Watford as Elisabetta).

Raim: I've been thinking. I want the names as well. I want everything.

Argia and Raim plot to get the names of the Queen's remaining supporters, who can be blackmailed at leisure, as well as the jewels she carries hidden in a basket of bread. They memorise the names, but Argia has a revulsion of feeling when Raim insists that the Queen must be killed almost at once.

Queen: I feel as if I were being reborn here in your arms.

The Queen, whose only desire is to get away, believes pathetically that Argia will help her. At the last moment Argia relents and helps her to escape the trap laid by Raim.

Amos: Madam! what is your name?

The soldiers wrongly think that it was Argia who was trying to escape and report to Amos, who already has his suspicion about this unknown woman. (*Left*, Biante, General of the revolutionary forces, who has come back severely wounded from the fighting in the hills (Alan Tilburn), and *centre*, the Porter (John Kidd)).

Amos: Madam, you are losing a great deal by lying to us. Suppose you come down to earth? Where were you born?

Amos, who believes that they have captured the Queen at last, begins to question Argia.

Biante: Your Majesty! Yes, your famous name has brought a lot of people down from the mountains to meet you. Do you know the sort of help they are bringing you? Do you know what they want? To see you condemned to death and hanged.

It is now obvious that the revolutionaries are convinced that Argia is the Queen and for the moment she revels in deceiving them.

The Woman: It was your fault!

Biante: All of you! All of you! Bear witness, all of you!

Having established her identity to their own satisfaction, Amos and Biante call in a jury of the people to pronounce judgment on the Queen, who in any case they intend to liquidate.

Argia: Gentlemen! I and this man, "who doesn't know" me, kept each other warm all through one whole winter!

Argia, who had been enjoying this little game of make believe, suddenly realises what danger she is in. She rushes to Raim to prove her identity, but he insists he has never set eyes on her before.

Argia: Raim! Raim! Call him back!

Raim rushes from the room and Argia is now panic-stricken. She realises that she is quite alone and tells them desperately of the real Queen she has helped to escape.

Argia: She carried poison with her . . . You have killed her.

The Queen has already been captured and having, through Argia's influence, gained a little courage, she is at last brave enough to take her own life. But Argia has now lost the one witness who might have saved her.

Amos: The coldness of the night seems to have brought you to your senses. Naturally the pardon is dependent on certain conditions.

Argia has been sentenced to death by the so - called People's Court and Amos tells her next morning she is free to ask for pardon, providing she signs a trumped-up confession and reveals the names of her accomplices. But in the ensuing argument with Amos, and inspired by the devotion of the Porter, who thinks her to be the Queen and believes in her courage, Argia takes on a new dignity and in the end refuses to sign the confession.

Argia: I'm not afraid any longer. My face expresses dignity. I am as I would always have wished to be. And it was simple after all. It was enough to want to be. Palaces have nothing to do with it. It was my own fault.

Below: Argia: I believe that God . . . has intentionally made us not docile, otherwise it would be useless . . . but different from Himself and a little too proud . . . so that we may . . . stand against Him, thwart Him, amaze Him . . . Perhaps that is His purpose.

Watching the dawn over the mountains, signal for her execution, Argia is strangely uplifted. Amos had played his trump card by confronting her with her supposed son, but under the stress she has forgotten the names of the Queen's friends and so cannot save the boy.

Below right: Argia: Unquestionably, this is a seat for kings, and in it we must try to live regally.

The moment before Argia walks out to meet the firing squad. As the volley is heard, Amos, deeply moved, involuntarily covers the boy's ears.

almost saves the first act from becoming tedious, while Michael Gwynn, as Francesca's other suitor, gives such a likeable portrayal of this sad-faced and eccentric fellow that her ultimate treatment of him seems almost shameful. L.M.

"Suspect" *(Royal Court)*

FLORA Robson undoubtedly chose this play (which was first produced in 1937 and was based by the authors, Edward Percy and Reginald Denham, on the gruesome Lizzie Borden murders), to star in and to produce, because the leading character gives such sustained opportunity for displaying that nervous tension and inward suffering which Miss Robson excels in portraying. Without her the revival would scarcely be justified, and one can only recommend a visit on account of the superb artistry of the star.

The play tells of a widow, Mrs. Smith, who is none too popular in the Cornish village in which she has settled, and whose son is about to marry a doctor's daughter. A chance visit of a Press lord—friend of the doctor—reveals that Mrs. Smith was, thirty years before, a young woman accused of a gruesome murder, and acquitted in Edinburgh on a "not proven" verdict, thanks largely to the evidence of her faithful maid, who is still with her. The doctor is determined to prevent his daughter from marrying a murderer's son, and by some rather clumsy third degree methods he and the Press lord are ultimately convinced of her innocence. The marriage can go on. After the terrible strain of discovery and all that follows, the curtain falls on a maniacal outburst from Mrs. Smith—axe in hand. We are left to form our own conclusions.

Apart from Miss Robson, only Arthur Howard, in the rôle of a kindly country parson, really convinced, but the other characters on the whole are not well drawn and the actors strove manfully to bring them to life. F.S.

"The Strong are Lonely" *(Piccadilly)*

AFTER a rather slow-moving opening scene, *The Strong are Lonely* develops into a finely dramatic play which grips the imagination.

Donald Wolfit gives an unusually restrained performance as the central character, the Father Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Paraguay, where, over 150 years,

(Continued on page 37)

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Gordon Harker as Albert

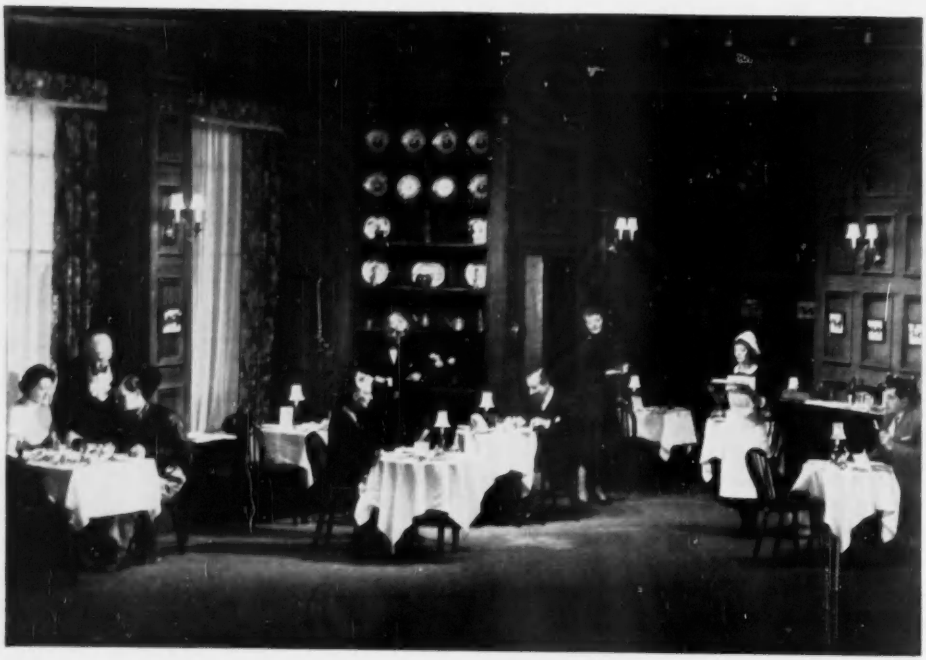
"Small Hotel"

at the St. Martin's

THIS amusing new comedy by Rex Frost has brought Gordon Harker back to the West End after too long an absence, and as Albert, the head waiter of The Jolly Fiddler, a small country hotel, he gives a delightful comedy performance, one of the best of his long career.

The play is directed by Murray Macdonald, with setting designed by Hal Henshaw, and tells of life behind the scenes at a modest hotel in the country when headquarters try to speed things up and send down a brassy and efficient waitress from a bigger hotel to replace Albert, the old-fashioned head waiter, who, if he does do a bit of fiddling on the side, has been popular with visitors and residents for over forty years.

Marjorie Fielding, as the dour permanent resident, and Eleanore Bryan, as the new young waitress, are particularly outstanding in a company that most skilfully convey the atmosphere of this cheerful little comedy.



The opening scene in the dining room of The Jolly Fiddler. *L. to R.*: Rosemarie Dunham as Rosemary; Albert, the head waiter; Moray Watson as Roland, Rosemary's boy friend; Marjorie Fielding as Mrs. Samson-Box, local magistrate and permanent resident at the hotel; Sydney King as Alan Pryor, the hotel manager; Anthony Sharp as Mr. Finch, a casual visitor who turns out to be a hotel efficiency expert from the Group's headquarters; Pam Marmont as Mrs. Pryor; Eleanore Bryan as the new young waitress who comes from the village, and Stanley Zevic as a rather incoherent foreigner who comes in for a meal.

Left: Albert persuades Roland, a casual guest who has brought his girl friend in for dinner, to have a bottle of burgundy. Mrs. Samson-Box obviously disapproves of this unconventionally attired young couple.

Effie, a high-spirited youngster, who has already been in trouble with the local magistrates, and looks like being an apt pupil of Albert's "tuition" in the tricks of the hotel trade, is discovered by Mrs. Samson-Box drinking a glass of wine and smoking a cigarette in the deserted dining room. She threatens to bring Effie to court again.

Pictures by Denis De Marney

Mr. Finch has revealed his real identity and informed the manager that Albert must go to make way for Miss Mallett, a new and most efficient waitress, who is seen in the picture (Diana King, *centre*), airing her views on how to run the dining room. *Left:* Gladys Henson as Mrs. Gammon, the cook, who takes an immediate dislike to this interfering young woman.

Mrs. Gammon forgets her long - standing feud with Albert when she hears that he is to be replaced by Miss Mallett. Albert himself has publicly given it out that he is retiring.

Below: Miss Mallett presents herself in the dining room in an exceedingly glamorous and unpractical waitress's "uniform". Mr. Finch is quite obviously most impressed by her, but after an argument with the manager and his wife, she is forced to go up and change into the usual uniform as worn by Effie.

Miss Mallett (she has forbidden the use of her Christian name, Caroline) gets busy in the dining room with a demonstration of how to speed things up. But Albert has a little plan to bring her off her perch and, first of all, accidentally spills some vinegar over her apron, forcing her to change back into her original uniform which is not likely to appeal to the hotel clientele.

Next, having told Miss Mallett not to take any nonsense from Mrs. Samson-Box, he arranges with Effie to push open the serving door at the wrong moment. Mrs. Samson-Box's dinner is thus flung unceremoniously at her feet.

The officious Mr. Finch browbeats Effie about the wine-drinking episode, much to the manager's annoyance. Mr. Finch is very anxious to keep the case out of court for the sake of the hotel's name.

Mr. Finch asks for an interview with Mrs. Samson-Box in an effort to persuade her not to bring the court case if Effie is dismissed. But Albert is determined to save Effie's job and his own too, into the bargain.

It transpires that Mr. Finch is no match for the redoubtable Mrs. Samson - Box, who, thanks to Albert's machinations, indulges in her own bit of blackmail by insisting that the hated Miss Mallett must go.

The happy ending for Effie and Albert. A dinner party is expected and Albert instructs the young waitress in a little bit of sharp practice over a bottle of wine.

"The Whole Truth"

● **Scenes from the ingenious new thriller by Philip Mackie, which is presented by Henry Sherek at the Aldwych. The play is directed by Leslie Linder with settings designed by Michael Eve.**

Left: Leslie Phillips as Carliss, masquerading as a detective, and Ernest Clark as Lewis Paulton, in the first act. *Below*: Arnold Bell as Detective - Inspector Brett questions Lewis Paulton, following the murder of a well - known actress. *Right*: Sarah Lawson as Brenda, Paulton's wife. A moment from the second act.

(Pictures by Houston Rogers).

Echoes from Broadway

New York Plays reviewed by our American Correspondent Mawby Green

Myron McCormick and Andy Griffith in the amusing manual dexterity test scene in "No Time for Sergeants," the Ira Levin comedy based on Mac Hyman's best selling novel.

(Picture by Fred Fehl)

THE first of the big comedy smashes to arrive is *No Time for Sergeants* by Ira Levin, adapted from the best selling novel by Mac Hyman. While one might wonder what there is left to laugh about in a draftee's first days in the army, from the non-stop howls of glee coming from the second night audience, the answer must be everything (including fifteen minutes of latrine jokes).

This time the hero is Will Stockdale, a hillbilly of such complete gullibility, goodheartedness and honesty that he is constantly puncturing the pomposity of those above him: sergeants, psychiatrists and generals. This pattern is repeated throughout, in what is more a series of cartoons than a play, but when the plot finally arrives to where a general in the air force has to award a medal to Will Stockdale's buddy in a clearing of woods in the dark of night before secretly transferring him into the infantry, credibility is strained to the point where the comedy becomes inane—perhaps to a lesser degree to the majority who are "with it" from the beginning.

Andy Griffith, making his Broadway debut in the long role of Will Stockdale, is the latest actor to become an overnight sensation—and well-deserved too, for the success or failure of this huge production rests squarely on his ability and personality.

Second honours belong to Peter Larkin who has done a fabulously funny job with his settings, as numerous as those for a major musical. For Maurice Evans, who presented the play in association with Emmett Rogers, *No Time for Sergeants* marks his third consecutive hit, the previous two being *Dial 'M' for Murder* and *The Teahouse of the August Moon.*

George Axelrod, author of the enormously popular *The Seven Year Itch*, his first play, knew his second wou'd be difficult, having set himself a high standard. Dramatizing this situation, he has a playwright in precisely that position in his second comedy, *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* Oddly enough, it is the triumph of artistic integrity, which takes up the bulk of the third act, that is the biggest letdown in a play that starts out strictly for laughs. The structure is rather complicated having to do with a literary agent who is also the devil; a non-talented movie magazine writer, who interviews a Marilyn Monroe type actress and almost loses one hundred per cent of his soul to the devil as he wins the love of America's sex symbol and the Academy Award for the best screenplay of the year, and the aforementioned playwright, who is mainly an observer, until integrity becomes the theme. If there is no cumulative build to *Will Success Spoil Rock*

Hunter?, there is a steady flow of laughs and Mr. Axelrod can now move on to his third comedy with less tension.

The ninety-fourth production which Guthrie McClintic has directed, *A Roomful of Roses* by Edith Sommer, has all the polish that comes from this experience and a slick script where every little piece is bevelled so it falls smoothly into place. A serious play about a teenage daughter of divorced parents, afraid to love or trust the world, until her confidence is won by the mother she has not seen in a decade, Miss Sommer handles the problem compassionately, if without much depth, in the manner that should pack the theatre on matinee days.

Patricia Neal as the mother heads an excellent cast, with Miss Neal looking remarkably like Mr. McClinic's wife, Katherine Cornell, and bringing to the role a similar glowing warmth.

After disappointing reports and grosses from its out-of-town tour, Enid Bagnold's *The Chalk Garden* came to Broadway to become the season's most original and provocative play: a symbolic comic melodrama, which grows more furiously funny as the suspense clouds gather. The basic story tells of a neurotic adolescent, being raised by her grandmother, a paradoxically scatterbrained and strong-willed woman, who has no green thumb for her garden or children, and of the strange governess, who proves a genius at both, having found this wisdom while serving a prison sentence for murder.

The dialogue, though bookish, is also dazzlingly clever, and in Gladys Cooper and Siobhan McKenna, as the grandmother and governess respectively, Miss Bagnold has two wizards to catch every nuance in the volatile moods of her play.

The astonishingly versatile Shirley Booth, after two successive dramatic triumphs and a romp through a musical, is back in a new comedy, *The Desk Set* by William Marchant, to prove she has no peer in this branch of the theatre, where she first started earning her bread and butter. As the head of the reference department of a large broadcasting company, Miss Booth has to pit her wits against an electronic brain, which threatens to make her and her assistants obsolete, and with an executive in the company, who has been shying away from marriage for seven long years. As an obvious sentimental comedy, the New York critics were not impressed by Miss Booth's choice of play but subsequent audiences seem delighted.

Making its first appearnce in the United States, the Comédie-Francaise is living up to its famous reputation with an enchantingly comic performance and production of Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*—and the French colony in New York, honouring its artists, is putting on the best fashion show to be found in the city on the other side of the footlights.

Joyce Grenfell Requests the Pleasure . . . may not have as long a run on Broadway as it did in the West End, having to stack its smallness against the mammoth musicals, but Miss Grenfell has scored a solid hit with her graciousness, sympathetic observations and tidy humour.

Right: **A scene from "A Roomful of Roses," from the play by Edith Sommer, directed by Guthrie McClintic. In the picture are *L to R:* Betty Lou Keim, Darryl Richard and Patricia Neal.**

(Photo by Fred Fehly

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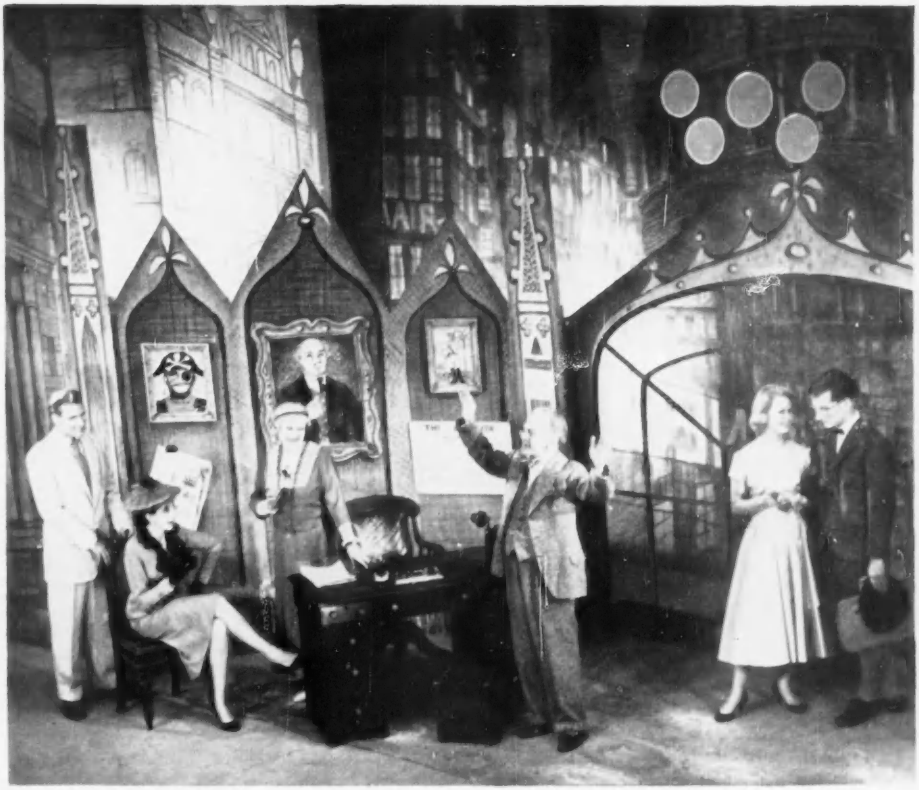


Mr. Donkin: How do you do Madam. May I bid you welcome to The Buccaneer.
Mrs. Winterton: Oh isn't this all too quaint for words. I am adoring every minute of it.

L. to R.: John Faassen as Peter Curtis, Thelma Ruby as Mrs. Winterton, Betty Warren as Mrs. Barraclough, Eliot Makeham as Mr. Donkin, Sally Bazely as Mabel Gray and Kenneth Williams as Montgomery in a moment from Act I, Scene V.

"The Buccaneer"

at the Lyric, Hammersmith

Pictures by Angus McBean

● **SANDY WILSON'S new musical play has achieved a tremendous success, rivalling that of *The Boy Friend*. It tells of the efforts of an old-fashioned boys' paper to survive the impact of modern journalism, and there are many delightful lyrics and tuneful melodies. The play is directed by William Chappell with his usual insight, and the delightful décor by Peter Snow admirably suits the character of the piece as well as the size of the stage and speed of the changes from scene to scene. A first rate company has been assembled and the orchestra is under the direction of Charles Zwar.**

Mrs. Barraclough is worried because it looks as though she will have to sell "The Buccaneer," the paper founded by her husband. In "The Buccaneer" offices in Fleet Street, she is seen with her secretary, Mabel, and Mr. Donkin, the magazine's chief contributor, who has been writing the adventures of "Captain Fairbrother" for many years, a series which fully lives up to Mrs. Barraclough's claim that "The Buccaneer" only supplies "Good Clean Fun". In the picture Mr. Donkin is singing the stirring number, "Captain Fairbrother".

Peter: I am seeing Montgomery after lunch. So I will get to work on him.
Mabel: That is wonderful, Peter!

Mabel has lunch with her friend, Peter Curtis, who is tutor to Montgomery Winterton, son of a very wealthy woman. He thinks that through the boy he may be able to interest the mother in "The Buccaneer" and so prevent the paper being sold to a go-getting American publisher of horror comics.

Above: Peter gets busy on Montgomery, an extremely supercilious schoolboy who is not slow to picture himself as the very efficient editor of "The Buccaneer." Peter sings "You'll find out."

Above right: It transpires that the glamorous Mrs. Winterton's interest in Peter is far from a business one when he broaches the subject of the magazine. She sings "Something's Missing."

Right: Marilyn (Pamela Tearle), the precocious young daughter of the American newspaper magnate, entertains her young friends in Kensington Gardens with the number "Oh, What a Beautiful Brain!"

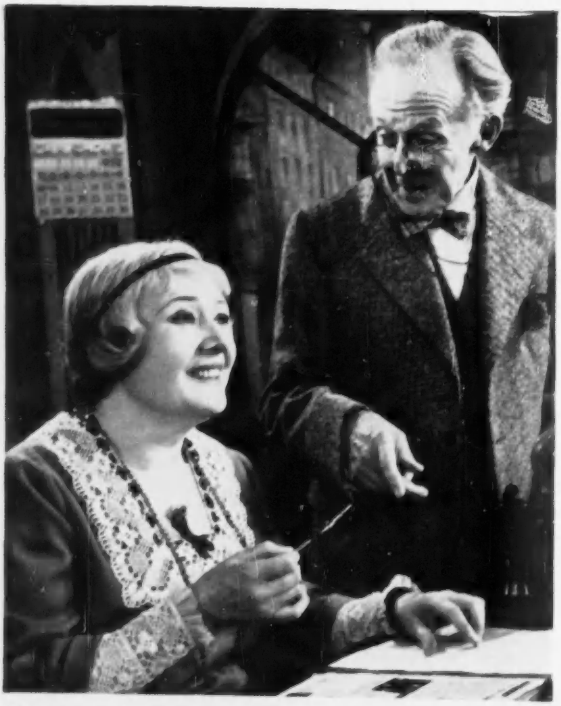
Montgomery has appointed Marilyn to be his secretary, and in the opening scene of Act II they sing "Read all about it", with their friends.

Above: Walter Maximus (Ronald Radd) and his daughter Marilyn, seen in Mr. Maximus' London office, sing their nostalgic number "In the Good old U.S.A."

Left: Mrs. Winterton's interest in Peter has made Mabel very unhappy. Here Montgomery's persistent mother sings a reprise of "Something's Missing."

Happy again, Peter and Mabel sing a reprise of "Unromantic Us", another hit number of the show.

Montgomery looks on disapprovingly during a romantic scene in the Park between Mabel and Peter, and joins in their song "Why did it have to be Spring?"



Mr. Donkin: Look, here is the final episode.

Mrs. Barraclough: I remember it so clearly! Mr. Barraclough and I wondered how you would manage to make all end well.

Mrs. Barraclough and Mr. Donkin reminisce over the exploits of the famous "Captain Fairbrother."

Below: Led by Peter, in the guise of Captain Fairbrother, Montgomery and his young friends stage a demonstration in Trafalgar Square. This, the finale of the show, provides a happy ending for "The Buccaneer" and all concerned.

Undiscovered Revue Star

by ERIC JOHNS

LAST January Kenneth Williams was playing the Dauphin to the Joan of Siobhan McKenna in the revival of Shaw's masterpiece at the St. Martin's. Now, with the same admirable dexterity, he is playing Montgomery, the twelve-year-old schoolboy-editor, in *The Buccaneer*, Sandy Wilson's latest musical, at the Lyric, Hammersmith. By mastering two such vividly contrasted parts in a space of less than twelve months, this thirty-year-old actor must surely qualify for having performed the most spectacular histrionic *tour de force* of the year.

At school he studied lithography, but when transferred to an Army Entertainment Unit in Singapore in 1946, he began to get different ideas about his future career. He played in revues all over Malaya and Burma, as well as in Hong Kong, often appearing with Stanley Baxter, who has since become one of the most popular comedians north of the Border.

When demobilised, Mr. Williams decided to try his luck in the theatre, but already his Army experience had indicated that stage confidence, relaxation and repose could only be acquired by appearing nightly in front of the public. So he decided a season or two in repertory could best teach him how to control an audience and for the next six years he appeared with resident companies at Newquay, Palmers Green, Stratford-atte-Bow, Bromley, High Wycombe, Eastbourne, Margate, Swansea, Worthing, Guildford, York, Scarborough, Salisbury, Bridgewater and Birmingham. After this ceaseless round of hard work in so many widely-scattered theatres, he felt equal to taking a chance in the West End.

After his initial success as the Dauphin, Mr. Williams was engaged by Orson Welles to appear as Elijah in that memorable bare-stage production of *Moby Dick* at the Duke of York's. There he was singled out by William Chappell, co-director of that production, to play the central figure in the forthcoming Sandy Wilson show. Mr. Chappell's imaginative eye visualised him as the precocious schoolboy, who suspects that algebra is sex symbolism and Napoleon was a woman. After the initial shock of being cast for the part, the young actor revelled in the grotesque comedy of the outgrown schoolboy, who really seems to have wandered into the story from the world of revue.

Kenneth Williams *(Portrait by John Brown)*

This young man's performance in *The Buccaneer* should establish his name as a valuable asset to intimate revue. He would excel in the less parochial type of show because he obviously has a taste for satire, which appeals to him enormously as the neatest way of making fun of anything bogus. Just as Paul Daneman was recruited from the Old Vic to *The Punch Revue*, Mr. Williams could easily slip away from Shaw to make a reputation as a witty satirist in the contemporary equivalent of the famous Gate Revues.

To be ready to take those revue chances, which are bound to come his way sooner or later, Mr. Williams is gaining further experience on the radio in *Hancock's Half-Hour*, with Tony Hancock, Bill Kerr and Sidney James. His one day away from *The Buccaneer* he spends conquering a new world. On Sunday morning and afternoon the Hancock comedy-team work on the script, concentrating upon every syllable and trying out a dozen different inflections. In the evening the show is broadcast before a live audience. Mr. Williams welcomes this challenge to his histrionic talents. At one and the same time he is called upon to satisfy the audience in the studio and the listener at home. Facial expression must not cause laughter likely to mystify those who can only hear him; nor must he

(Continued on page 41)

The Old Vic Company in

"The Merry Wives of Windsor"

● **Second play of the season, "The Merry Wives," is directed by Douglas Seale. The décor is by Paul Shelving and music composed by John Hotchkis.**

Pictures by Desmond Tripp

Top: Paul Rogers as Sir John Falstaff, and the scene in which Sir Hugh Evans (Dudley Jones) seeks refuge in the arms of Page (Jack Gwillim) when challenged to a duel by Dr. Caius (Aubrey Morris). Also in the picture are The Host (Harold Kasket), Simple (Keith Taylor), Rugby (John Woodvine), Shallow (Gerald Cross) and Slender (Job Stewart). *Centre*: Wendy Hiller as Mistress Page and Margaret Rawlings as Mistress Ford. *Left*: The closing scene of the play.

The Old Vic Company in "The Winter's Tale"

● **The third play is produced by Michael Benthall with décor and costumes designed by Peter Rice and music composed by Christopher Whelen.**

Top: Hermione (Wendy Hiller), falsely accused by Leontes, appeals to Apollo to prove her innocence, and, *top right*, Paul Rogers as Leontes. *Centre*: The old shepherd (Dudley Jones) plights the troth of his supposed daughter Perdita (Zena Walker) to Florizel (John Fraser). Included, *right*, are Charles Gray and Denis Holmes as Polixenes and Camillo. *Right*: Paulina's steward (Harold Kasket) describes the excitement caused by the reunion of Leontes and Perdita. Also in the picure are *L to R*: Derek Francis as Rogero, John Neville as Autolycus, John Woodvine as Cleomenes and Anthony White as Dion.

Whispers from the Wings

Elizabeth Seal

IN her last West End show she was in the chorus; in her current one, *The Pajama Game* at the Coliseum, she plays second lead and was acclaimed on the opening night as a rising new star. Such is the career of Elizabeth Seal. She made her name in a night in the first part she ever played. Her story is as simple as that.

This twenty-year-old girl from Ealing first took up dancing at the age of eight and made such promising progress that a year later she was awarded a five-year scholarship at the Royal Academy of Dancing. Under expert tuition it began to look as if she would make her name as a classical ballerina, but on reaching the age of fifteen her plans were shattered by an accident. After nursing a badly injured ankle for nine months she had to face the grim fact that it would never be possible to dance on pointes again. That scotched her career as a ballerina, though she could still dance well enough to appear in musical shows which did not call for pointe work. By the time she was sixteen she secured a chorus job at the Saville in *Gay's the Word*—the last Novello show, written for Cicely Courtneidge.

Her next job was in the chorus of Anna Neagle's musical cavalcade, *The Glorious Days*, and later she danced in the lavish Cecil Landeau revue, *Cockles and Champagne*. By that time young Miss Seal was eager to play a small part. She had no inflated ideas about herself, and asked no more than a part with a line or two.

No one would look at her. She could get chorus jobs easily enough, but when producers discovered she had no previous experience of playing a part, they passed her over, and looked at the next applicant. For nine heartbreaking months Miss Seal turned down job after job in the chorus, hoping desperately that someone would eventually give her a chance to get a foot on the bottom rung of the ladder. Then *The Pajama Game* was being cast in London.

She went along in the hope that there might be a minor part, as one of the many work-girls in the factory scenes. To her astonishment, the American producers were so impressed by her dancing talent, her urchin cut, her enormous eyes and broad grin that they discussed her for the important part of the secretary, Gladys, described in the book by a single word—*cute*. Having seen the show on Broadway, where the part was created by Carol Haney, they had sufficient imagination to see Elizabeth Seal playing it in London.

She had no name, but they were prepared to take a gamble. They felt it would be better to give the part to an unknown girl who looked cute than to a star who might be a misfit. They were ready to take the trouble to try and mould her into the show, particularly as she was a dancer and was to be tried out in the best dancing part seen in a musical show for years.

For three long weeks the American showmen worked on Miss Seal. They had her specially coached in modern ballet, with which she was unfamiliar and a music teacher worked hard to instruct her how to put over her numbers in that low half-talking voice that passes for singing. She responded quickly and enthusiastically to direction and they thought her good enough to try her luck on the opening night. That night was just like the time Dolores Gray, Julie Wilson and Jean Carson rocketed themselves to stardom on the strength of a single dynamic performance. A new star twinkled in the West End.

But now the little girl is not resting on her laurels. She is already hard at work on her singing lessons and hopes to surprise her next first night audience with a pleasing soprano voice. She also hopes to tackle a part with more histrionic opportunities. She admits to looking like a cartoon of Audrey Hepburn, but insists upon retaining her urchin hair-do which is most flattering to her features; when she lets it grow people accuse her of trying to look like Jean Simmons, so she intends to go her own way until they get used to accepting her as Elizabeth Seal. Incidentally, no one has yet realised that she is the most attractive dancing comedienne since Adele Astaire skipped off the stage into the Peerage.

The Strong are Lonely *(Cont.)*

this order has developed a flourishing Utopian state. Now, in 1767, the Father Provincial receives a visit from the Spanish King's Deputy (an old friend of his, who is, however, strictly impartial). Madrid and the unscrupulous South American Spanish settlers, fear the power of this unique State and seek to destroy it. The priests are ordered to abandon their life's work and leave the country. This the Father Provincial refuses to do—only to capitulate to another visitor, the sinister Legate sent by the Jesuits' Father General. The Paraguay state is also proving an embarrassment to the Order, and in a fine scene he calls on the Father Provincial's oath of absolute obedience.

But the real burden of the author's argument comes near the end of the play, perhaps a little too late. The Father Provincial, torn asunder by the terrible decision he has had to make to abandon the welfare of 150,000 Indians, questions two new converts, and discovers that their reasons for becoming Christians are purely materialistic. He had failed utterly in his attempt to found a "kingdom of God" upon earth to teach them that the way of Christ was the way of suffering. Some of his priests have defied his orders, and there is a rebellion. Having found the true meaning of his soul-searching, it is inevitable he should rush out to his death. As he lies dying, he is heard to murmur "The Kingdom of God is within."

Apart from Mr. Wolfit, there are splendid performances from Robert Harris as the King's Deputy, Ernest Milton as the Jesuit Legate, and Derek Oldham as a Dutch Calvinist merchant. The play is produced sensitively by Margaret Webster and Rolf Gerard's austere but sun-drenched set is admirably in keeping. F.S.

"The Good Soldier Schweik"

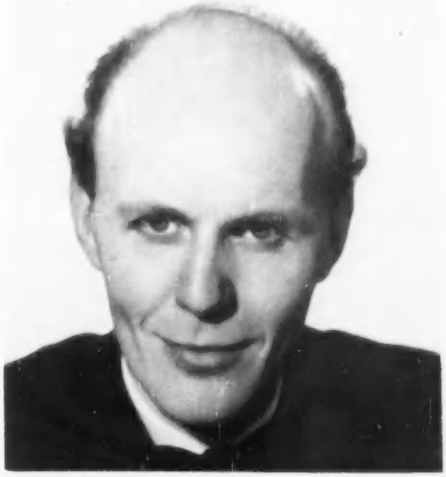
(Theatre Royal, Stratford, E.)

ON 25th October, Theatre Workshop revived their last year's production of *The Good Soldier Schweik*, adapted from the novel of Jaroslav Hasek by Ewan MacColl and produced by Joan Littlewood. A play from the same source is said to have swept Berlin off its feet in Erwin Piscator's version in 1927. Now, after many years, we are indebted to the pioneering enthusiasm of Theatre Workshop for an opportunity of seeing a work well-known in other countries. It is now a period piece

(Continued on page 43)

"Puss in Boots"

Left, **John Stone as Gerard and the author, Nicholas Stuart Gray, as "Puss," in a scene from "The Marvellous Story of Puss in Boots," the charming Christmas play, which will be seen in London again at the Fortune Theatre, opening on 24th December. Incidentally the play is being given a ten weeks' run by the Burlington Repertory Company and has also been chosen as their Christmas production by Chesterfield Repertory, Dundee Repertory and Redcar Repertory, besides being toured by the West of England Theatre Company.** *(Picture by Robin Adler)*



David Nixon

who stars as Buttons in "Cinderella," the only West End pantomime this year, which opens at the Palace on 21st December. Mrs. David Nixon (Paula Marshall) plays Dandini and the décor is by Doris Zinkeisen.

Two Great Men of the Theatre

by R. B. Marriott

A portrait of James Bridie in his last years, the frontispiece in Mrs. Bannister's fascinating book. Her style is lively and eminently readable, and in the three parts, which must have involved much research, she writes, first, on Bridie, Man and Boy; secondly, reviews in detail the whole of his plays and, thirdly, outlines with a sure touch Bridie's work for the Scottish National Theatre movement. The author from her own knowledge of him recreates with a sure touch Bridie's vivid personality and the illustrations, a number seen for the first time, are exceedingly well-chosen. Theatregoers on both sides of the border will find this a work of unusual interest.

"MAN of the theatre" is a term often loosely used to describe a person who in one way or another has devoted a large part of his life to the stage. But it has a deeper, more significant meaning, which can justly be implied only rarely. There are actors, dramatists, producers, and scenic artists, not to mention managers, great and small, who win fine, firm places, within the world of the theatre. Naturally, they must have uncommon distinction to do this. But a real man of the theatre belongs as it were to the very growth and fabric of the theatre in every meaning possible. It is not necessary that he should be an outstanding executant in every facet of production, writing, and acting, but it is essential that he is able to inspire others in every facet. He must know more than others, be able to guide and challenge, know where the best lies, and bring it out, be aware of and sensitive to every vibrating element that goes to the making of a successful theatre-unit or single production. He must also be in love with the theatre. Irving was such a one, and so in their varying ways were Lilian Baylis and William Poel. Of living people, one might mention John Gielgud and Tyrone Guthrie.

inspired by the new books
James Bridie and his theatre by Winifred Bannister (*Rockliff*, 25/- *net*) and **Granville Barker** by C. B. Purdom (*Rockliff*, 30/- *net*)

Harley Granville-Barker and James Bridie certainly were true men of the theatre. They influenced and inspired the theatre of their time, and gave their greatest devotion to it, not for personal gratification alone, but for the good of all. They were ready always to pass on to others whatever they learned and to make way, so far as may be humanly possible, for a younger generation. Men of great spirit and imagination, they were able to see and believe in, work and sacrifice for, something greater than themselves.

But if you want to read full, authoritative accounts of the lives of these fascinating men, you cannot do better than obtain *Harley Granville Barker, Man of the Theatre, Dramatist, and Scholar*, by C. B. Purdom (Rockliff 30s.) and Winifred Bannister's *James Bridie and his theatre* (Rockliff 25s.). These books are teeming with information, capturing in clear, lively prose the atmosphere in which their subjects lived and worked. Both give vivid impressions of character and personality, and in the case of Mr. Purdom's biography, there are letters and fresh information of great intimate interest. These are biographies of serious thought and exhaustive research, but also exciting stories of spiritual and emotional adventure.

Mr. Purdom and Mrs. Bannister both personally knew the men of whom they write with such admiration and warmth as well as with good judgment. They completely avoid the dry-dust approach so apt to overlay serious theatre biography. It is not easy to bring fresh life to an examination of old productions and endeavours of long ago, however intrinsically important they may have been. It is an achievement to make theatre history live, when too often its vitality seems to have been spent at the time it happened, and to defy resurrection. In this respect, particularly, Mr. Purdom and Mrs. Bannister are to be congratulated. The books, too, will help to lead young theatregoers to a better understanding and

This early study of Shaw and Harley Granville Barker, taken in 1901, is typical of the many unique illustrations in C. B. Purdom's masterly biography of Granville Barker. As well as providing a splendid history of the new movement in our theatre which began at the turn of the century, largely due to the influence of Granville Barker himself, the book provides a sympathetic study of Barker the man, and deals fully with the enigma of his second marriage and withdrawal for thirty years from active participation in the theatre. There is a wealth of invaluable correspondence, published for the first time, from the pens of Shaw, J. M. Barrie and Gilbert Murray, among many other illustrious figures who were Barker's close friends and this is a book which will take its place among the outstanding theatre biographies of our time.

appreciation of vital aspects of a theatrical heritage that is still a major national pride.

I met both these great men of the theatre, not often in the case of Granville-Barker, but enough in both cases to feel the fire and worth of their minds and personalities. Bridie loved to talk. He held forth on himself, on other dramatists, on life, art, drink, or hotel cuisines. In fact, when in the mood, on anything at all that interested him. The point was that he talked so well, always having an original thought which he expanded with rare wit and felicity. He could be glum, depressed. Sometimes, he told me, he believed unshakeably in his vocation; at other times being convinced he could not write another line. "I am part charlatan and part genius," he once said to me, beaming over his glass of whisky. But beneath all his personal feelings was an indestructable love of the theatre and a wish to serve it with all his energy and talent.

Bridie helped actors and was amazingly unselfish in assisting new dramatists to get their plays into shape, and then produced. His influence on the serious theatre of his native Scotland was considerable, and to the welfare of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre he gave as much time and thought as to the writing of his plays. Some people considered, too much. He was happy creating plays, happy inside a theatre, happy writing about the drama, happy supporting some new scheme. He was perverse, provocative and wilful, lovable and a little mysterious, as Mrs. Bannister cleverly brings out.

Harley Granville-Barker, when I met him in the 'thirties, did not want to talk much, but to listen. He was not often in England then, since his active participation in the theatre was over. His Prefaces to Shakespeare plays had overshadowed in the public mind his work at the Royal Court and even his own plays. But one caught the gleam of his love for the theatre in a kind of upside-down way. It was communicated in his ardent interest in what I, a very young man, had to say; in listening to my latest enthusiasms and ambitions. Every now and again, at tea in his sitting-room at the Ritz, he put in a word, but would not be drawn. "What I have said and done is in my plays and my books—it is on record," he said. Not, mind you, as grandly as that, for he tended to deprecate his achievements. But he was pleased that a young man should have sought him out. I felt he was then a sad, lonely man, waiting and listening for something that never came.

Why he left the theatre as he did, this brilliant producer-actor-dramatist, when it seemed there was still so much work for him to to, has not yet been completely explained. When I had the temerity to ask him, he shrugged his broad, elegant shoulders, his white, handsome face thrown back, his legs crossed in a twist, and said, "One wants to live too; don't you?"

He gave superbly to the theatre, being with Bernard Shaw probably the most important pioneer and creator in the early days of the century. All he wrote on the theatre still has immense value. *The Voysey Inheritance*, the only one of his plays adequately revived in London in recent years, has the stamp of an enduring masterpiece. His personality, like that of James Bridie, still retains its magic for us.

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Theatrical Companion to Maugham by Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson (*Rockliff*, 42/- *net*).

This excellent companion volume to the *Theatrical Companion to Shaw* has an Introduction by J. C. Trewin and covers thirty-two plays and seven adaptations from stories and novels by Somerset Maugham. Fully illustrated, covering films, and American productions, as well as English, the book provides a wonderful survey of the great playwright's work.

Theatre 1954-1955, by Ivor Brown (*Max Reinhardt Ltd.*, 18/- *net*).

The first of a new series of a yearly book consisting of original writing on the theatre with details of the year's productions in Central London and those of the repertories as well as the work of the Scottish Theatre and the amateurs. Contributors are Sir Bronson Albery, George Devine, Louis Kronenberger, J. B. Priestley and Peter Ustinov.

Theatre World Annual No. 6 (*Rockliff*, 18/- *net*).

The new annual just published covers fully in pictures over fifty London productions from June 1954 to May 1955. There are the usual number of full-page portraits, list of play casts and sections devoted to opera and ballet, as well as the Review of the Year in the London theatre.

The Vicarious Years, by John van Druten (*Heinemann*, 12/6 *net*). A new novel by the famous playwright.

Lucky Star, the autobiography of Margaret Lockwood (*Odhams*, 12/6 *net*).

The Art of Make-Up, by Serge Strenkovsky (*Muller*, 22/6 *net*).

Enter the Ballerina, by Pigeon Crowle (*Faber*, 15/- *net*).

Julius Caesar, edited by T. S. Dorsch (in the Arden Shakespeare Series) (*Methuen*, 15/- *net*).

The Boy Friend, by Sandy Wilson. Illustrated by the author. (*Andre Deutsch*, 10/6 *net*).

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Theatre on Record

by Roy Plomley

PRIDE of place this month to our two White Hopes of musical comedy, Messrs Wilson and Slade.

The first record to appear from Sandy Wilson's *The Buccaneer* is a 10 in. 78 r.p.m. piano selection **(Decca F10629).** Peggy Cochrane plays half a dozen of the tunes pleasantly with an almost Kunz - like simplicity.

The Oriole company do Mr. Slade proud with a 12 in. long-player called *The Music of Julian Slade* **(Oriole MG20005).** This disc gives seventeen of his earlier songs, including some he wrote for undergraduate productions while still at Cambridge. Also included are several songs from Bristol Old Vic productions of Shakespeare and Dekker, and a selection of his music to Sheridan's *The Duenna*, which played at the Westminster Theatre last year. The singers include Jane Wenham and John Neville, who were in *The Duenna*, and Eleanor Drew and James Cairncross, who are now playing in *Salad Days*. I must award bad marks, however, for the pointless and persistent intrusion of a "narrator," who repeats the information to be found on the record sleeve.

Following *Noël and Gertie*, His Master's Voice now offer *Gertrude Lawrence Successes*, a 10 in. long-player **(HMV DLP 1099).** On one side are five of Cole Porter's songs from *Nymph Errant*, in which she appeared at His Majesty's Theatre in 1933, and on the other side, some songs from Kurt Weill's score of *Lady in the Dark*, her great New York success of 1941. I found the *Nymph Errant* music particularly nostalgic, and it was a delight to hear again such songs as "The Physician" and "Experiment."

Columbia has issued two 78 r.p.m. discs from *Romance in Candlelight*. On **DB3687,** Patricia Burke and Roger Dann sing the title song, and Sally Ann Howes and Jacques Pils take over with "Live a Little, Love a Little"; and, on **DB3688,** Sally Ann Howes sings "My Heart says Yes" and Jacques Pils sings "Oh-la-la, boom, boom, boom." It is pleasant to hear the voice of Jacques Pils again, for the first time since the popular Pils et Tabet duets of the 'thirties. Who remembers "Couchés dans le foin"?

In the new London International list is a complete recording, in French, of *Les Cloches de Corneville* **(TW91114/5).** It is given a lively performance by an excellent cast, headed by Louis Musy as "Gaspard" and Colette Riedinger as "Serpolette". On looking up the reference books, I find that the first London production, at the Folly Theatre in 1878, ran for 700 performances, which must have been a staggering run in those days. From such an old vehicle one might expect a creak or two, but if there were any, they were drowned in the general jollity.

Undiscovered Revue Star *(Cont.)*

whisper into the microphone words which cannot be caught by people in the studio. He has to give his best to both worlds at the same time.

Mr. Williams is more interested in dramatic literature than in roles, as such. He regards the theatre as the home of drama and is primarily interested in authors who have something to say dramatically. While he admires the exquisite writing of the poets, he feels the theatre is not always the right medium for the expression of their work. As an actor, he wants to see a slice of life put on the boards, a slice of the life he recognises and understands. Then his imagination is fired to give one of those performances which authors dream about but rarely have the good fortune to see.

The combined experience of repertory, the classics, musicals, radio and television would fit this young actor to play in any devasting sketch likely to be found in modern revue; if a producer has the initiative to use Kenneth Williams in this medium he will probably enjoy the satisfaction of introducing to the West End a new-style comedian, with an essentially individual, crisp, metallic style.

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New Shows Reviewed *(Contd.)*

The Good Soldier Schweik *(Contd.)*

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The rapid succession of comic sketches was effected by a revolving panel adorned with clever black and white designs. A play of this nature could hardly have been better done. The acting was effortless. Mr. Maxwell Shaw had the right innocence for Schweik and never faltered in the very long part. The company seemed tireless. In particular, there was good doubling by Miss Avis Bunnage, Mr. Bryn Bartlett, Mr. Peter Bridgmont, Mr. Howard Goorney, Mr. Michael Ivan and Mr. Gerry Raffles.

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As most theatregoers know, every time a new show comes to the London stage a "library deal" is done, involving various firms forming the Combined Libraries Association. This naturally does entail a gamble, but the executives become extraordinarily sensitive in assessing the probable runs of plays after attending thousands of first nights. It is also the policy of Keith Prowse to see that their operators visit the theatres so that they are able to recommend the right kind of shows, and customers often ring up their favourite operator and merely ask for "seats for any show I would like." It is also very helpful to the casual theatregoer to be advised for instance what show would be unsuitable for a mother-in-law or a daughter of tender years, or what would be the ideal entertainment for a bachelor party!

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An Artist in Criticism

by Harold Matthews

THE age of the common man is inevitably a critical age. Working hours being fewer, "leisure" has become an engrossing secondary interest and people take their pleasures seriously. It is a good time therefore to consider with understanding the case of a Civil Servant whose "secondary" interest was dramatic criticism, which he regarded steadily as an art in itself, so that, in his hands, it became one.

17th December this year marks the centenary of the birth of Arthur Bingham Walkley, an Assistant Secretary of the Post Office and dramatic critic of *The Times*.

Born in Bristol, Walkley obtained a mathematical exhibition at Balliol College, Oxford, at the age of 17, but was soon after elected to a scholarship at Corpus Christi. In addition to mathematics, he read extensively in the French, Italian and Spanish languages.

On leaving Oxford in 1877, he entered the Secretary's Office of the General Post Office. Here for 42 years he had a distinguished career. He was secretary to the British Delegation at the Washington Postal Congress in 1897, Secretary to the Imperial Penny Postage Conference in 1898 and a British Delegate at the Congress of Rome in 1906.

To be a highly-respected Civil Servant did not fulfil Walkley's requirements of life. He saw himself as a man of letters. His friend William Archer awakened his interest in the drama and he became dramatic critic for *The Speaker*, a Liberal weekly. In 1888 *The Star* was founded with Walkley as dramatic critic and George Bernard Shaw as music critic. Shaw used to sign his articles "Corno di Bassetto," and on an occasion when, during Shaw's absence, Walkley attended a concert in his stead, he allowed himself the humorous indulgence of signing his notice "Bono di Corsetto."

He was appointed dramatic critic of *The Times* in 1902 and retained this position until his death in 1926. His independent judgment, his erudition and his style combined to impress upon the reading public a personality which the anonymity of *The Times* could not hide. People who knew the name of no other dramatic critic knew that A. B. Walkley wrote the criticisms in *The Times*. He is "Trotter" in the Prologue and Epilogue of *Fanny's First Play*.

Walkley introduced from France the idea of "impressionist criticism." In other words, instead of taking to the theatre fixed specifications of what a play ought to be, he tried always to enjoy a new work as an imaginative adventure and then, after he had returned to his room, would examine his impressions and set down what the play had amounted to for him. He held that it was the duty of the artist, especially the artist of the theatre, to provide delight, but in company with Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Bernard Shaw and Max Beerbohm, he disclaimed any nonsense about being "in love" with the theatre. What interested him most was what he was going to say about it. He was in love, if the phrase can be allowed, with the art of criticism. In 1909, he told the Royal Commission on the Censorship of Plays that he thought people were taking things a little too solemnly. He was in favour of some sort of censorship but it did not greatly matter. The importance of drama was apt to be over-rated. Arnold Bennett voiced the irritation many must have felt when he called him the upas-tree of modern drama. But Walkley's refusal to be swept by popular enthusiasm from the rock of his independence made him the sound critic he assuredly was. He wrote for his time but his opinions would find more agreement now than those of most of his contemporaries. He recognised the genius of Ibsen when most of our island pundits were foaming at the mouth. When Wilde's first success, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, was produced in 1892, he and his friend Archer formed a small minority critical opinion favourable on balance. When *The Importance of Being Earnest* was first performed, three years later, his

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praise in *The Speaker* was expressed as follows: "Believe me it is with no ironic intention that I declare Mr. Oscar Wilde to have 'found himself' at last, as an artist in sheer nonsense. There is no discordant note of seriousness. It is of nonsense all compact and better nonsense I think the stage has not seen. The laughter it excites is absolutely free from bitter afterthought."

He had blamed Pinero for sacrificing the true outcome of his ideas in his plays for the sake of rounding off the action, and he was accordingly whole-hearted in his approval of *Iris* produced at the Garrick in 1901 with Miss Gladys Cooper as Iris. After the cheap plot-solutions of *Mrs. Tanqueray, Mrs. Ebbsmith* and *The Benefit of the Doubt*, "for the first time Mr. Pinero had not shrunk from a real denouément and it must have cost him much to nerve himself to it. For the denouément of *Iris* overwhelms."

Next year, Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton* delighted Walkley—"In form a brilliant extravaganza, in substance a piece of hard logic—as delightful a play as the English stage has produced in our generation."

When Shaw's *Candida* appeared at The Court in April 1904, Walkley wrote with wit words that still satisfy. "Fantasy has its place in the theatre, as well as realism, and that is one reason why the theatre has room for Mr. Bernard Shaw. His method of travestying life is to eliminate from it everything but pure 'intelligence.' Mr. Shaw obtains most amusing results . . . The lady is asked to choose between two sets of ideas and gravely, without irony, makes her choice . . . In real life she is what American slang calls a 'holy terror'."

The plays of Henry Arthur Jones were seldom acceptable to Walkley's fastidious taste and he was apt to dismiss them with such uncomplimentary phrases as "a riot of noisy nonsense," or "comedie rosse." The fiery Jones fumed and took steps. His daughter, in her biography of her father, relates how, on the occasion *Whitewashing Julia* was produced by Arthur Bourchier at the Garrick Theatre in 1903, "when Mr. Walkley arrived on the first night, the manager politely requested him to leave." Then Mr. Bourchier and Mr. Jones "both wrote to the papers several letters in which they explained their attitude at length."

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An Artist in Criticism *(Contd.)*

From this point in time they look a little ridiculous and one imagines A.B.W. relinquishing a dish of Jones and Bourchier with a tranquil mind. He was incapable of personal bias. Five years later he gave praise to *Dolly Reforming Herself* in which Ethel Irving and Robert Loraine appeared at the Haymarket, saying of the quarrel scene in the third act "We regard that as a specimen of English comedy at its very best."

Walkley wrote no books as such, but he published seven volumes of reprints of his short essays. Only the early volumes contain dramatic criticism of specified performances. What he wrote about plays produced after 1907 can only be found on the files of *The Times*.

At Pound Hill he grew apples and pears. He did not eat them, but grew them and studied how to bring them on.

Later he moved to Brightlingsea and there illness cut him off from the theatre, a circumstance at which he chafed. He died in 1926. His portrait, drawn by William Rothenstein, shows an elderly quizzical face of almost romantic interest with beard cut French fashion.

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London Theatre Guide

Please confirm theatre times from daily press. Note: Shows marked † will have their first performances during December.

Straight Plays

CRITERION (Whi. 3216)
Evs. 7.30, Sat. 5.30 & 8.30, Thurs. 2.30
WAITING FOR GODOT

HAYMARKET (Whi. 9832)
Evs. 7.30, Wed., Sat. 2.30
THE QUEEN AND THE REBELS
Irene Worth

†OLD VIC (Wat. 7616)
Evs. 7.15, Thurs., Sat. 2.30
JULIUS CAESAR
THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR
THE WINTER'S TALE
Opening 13th December
HENRY V

†PHOENIX (Tem. 8611)
Opening 8th December
HAMLET
Paul Scofield, Diana Wynyard, Alec Clunes

PICCADILLY (Ger. 4506)
Evs. 7.30, Thurs. and Sat. 2.45
THE STRONG ARE LONELY
Donald Wolfit
Closing 10th December

ROYAL COURT (Slo. 1745)
Evs. 8.0, Thurs. 2.30, Sat. 5.0 & 8.0
SUSPECT
Flora Robson

ST. JAMES'S (Whi. 3903)
Evs. 7.30, Mats. Wed., Sat. 2.30
SEPARATE TABLES
Eric Portman and Margaret Leighton

†SAVILLE (Tem. 4011)
Evs. 7.45, Wed. & Sat. 2.30
THE SHADOW OF DOUBT
John Clements, Jane Baxter, Raymond Huntley
Commencing 21st December
THE WILD DUCK
Dorothy Tutin, Emlyn Williams

Comedies

APOLLO (Ger. 2663)
Evs. 7.30, Mat. Wed. 2.30, Sat 5.30 & 8.30
SUMMERTIME
Geraldine McEwan, Dirk Bogarde

CAMBRIDGE (Tem. 6056)
Evs. 8.0, Thurs. 2.45, Sat. 6.0 & 8.30
THE RELUCTANT DEBUTANTE
Celia Johnson, Wilfrid Hyde White

DUCHESS (Tem. 8243)
Evs. 7.30, Mat. Thurs. 2.30, Sat. 5.30 & 8.30
MR. KETTLE AND MRS. MOON
Clive Morton and Frances Rowe

DUKE OF YORK'S (Tem. 5112)
Evs. 7.45, Thurs. 2.30, Sat. 5.30 & 8.30
LUCKY STRIKE
Ambrosine Philipotts

†GLOBE (Ger. 1592)
Evs. 7.30, Mats. Wed., Sat. 2.30
MRS. WILLIE
Yvonne Arnaud
Closing 17th December
Opening 22nd December
CHARLEY'S AUNT

HER MAJESTY'S (Whi. 6606)
Evs. 7.30, Wed. 2.30, Sat. 5.30 & 8.30
THE TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON
Phil Brown, Dickie Henderson

†LYRIC (Ger. 3686)
ANNIVERSARY WALTZ
Bernard Braden and Barbara Kelly

NEW (Tem. 3878)
Evs. 7.45, Mat. Tues. 2.30, Sat. 5.30 & 8.30
THE REMARKABLE MR. PENNYPACKER
Nigel Patrick, Hugh Wakefield, Elizabeth Sellars

ST. MARTIN'S (Tem. 1443)
Evs. 7.30, Tues. 2.30, Sat. 5.0 & 8.0
SMALL HOTEL
Gordon Harker, Marjorie Fielding

STRAND (Tem. 2660)
Evs. 7.30, Thurs. 2.30, Sat. 5.15 & 8.30
SAILOR BEWARE!
Peggy Mount

WHITEHALL (Whi. 6692)
Evs. 7.30, Thurs. 2.30, Sat. 5.15 & 8.15
DRY ROT
John Slater, Brian Rix, Basil Lord

Thrillers

ALDWYCH (Tem. 6404)
Evs. 7.30, Wed. 2.30, Sat. 6.0 & 8.30
THE WHOLE TRUTH
Leslie Phillips and Ernest Clark

AMBASSADORS (Tem. 1171)
Evs. 7.30, Tues. 2.30, Sat. 5.15 & 8.0
THE MOUSETRAP
Patrick Doonan

SAVOY (Tem. 8888)
Evs. 7.45, Wed. 2.45, Sat. 5.30 & 8.30
SPIDER'S WEB
Margaret Lockwood

WESTMINSTER (Vic. 0283)
Evs. 7.30, Thurs. 2.30, Sat. 5.0 & 8.15
DEAD ON NINE
Griffith Jones and Hy Hazell

Musicals

COLISEUM (Tem. 3161)
Evs. 7.30, Wed. 2.30, Sat. 5.30 & 8.30
THE PAJAMA GAME
Joy Nichols and Edmund Hockridge

DRURY LANE (Tem. 8108)
Evs. 7.15, Mats. Wed., Sat. 2.30
THE KING AND I
Eve Lister, George Pastell, Muriel Smith

LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH (Riv. 4432)
Evs. 7.30, Thurs. 3.0, Sat. 5.30 & 8.30
THE BUCCANEER

†PICCADILLY (Ger. 4506)
Opening 15th December
A GIRL CALLED JO
Joan Heal and Dennis Quilley

STOLL (Hol. 3703)
Evs. 7.30, Wed. 2.30, Sat. 2.30 & 8.30
KISMET
Alfred Drake, Doretta Morrow

(Continued opposite)

Wherever smoking is permitted—**ABDULLAS FOR CHOICE**

VAUDEVILLE (Tem. 4871)
Evs. 8.0, Thurs. 2.30, Sat. 5.0 & 8.0
SALAD DAYS

WINTER GARDEN (Chan. 3875)
Evs. 7.30, Thurs. Sat. 2.45
THE WATER GIPSIES
Dora Bryan, Peter Graves, Wallas Eaton

WYNDHAMS (Tem. 3028)
Evs. 8.30, Wed. 2.30, Sat. 5.30 & 8.30
THE BOY FRIEND
Anne Rogers and Anthony Hayes

Revues and Variety

†ADELPHI (Tem. 3028)
Daily 6.10 and 8.50
THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Jimmy Edwards, Tony Hancock, Dave King
Commencing 14th December
SUCH IS LIFE
Al Read

GARRICK (Tem. 4601)
Evs. 8.0, Wed., Sat. 5.30 & 8.30
LA PLUME DE MA TANTE
Robert Dhery

HIPPODROME (Ger. 3272)
Evs. 6.15 & 8.45
MEET ME ON THE CORNER
Max Bygraves

PALLADIUM (Ger. 7373)
Evs. 6.15 & 8.45, Mats. Sat. 2.40
PAINTING THE TOWN
Norman Wisdom and Ruby Murray

PRINCE OF WALES (Whi. 8681)
Twice nightly 6.15 & 8.50
PARIS BY NIGHT
Benny Hill and Tommy Cooper

VICTORIA PALACE (Vic. 1317)
Nightly 6.15 & 8.45
JOKERS WILD
The Crazy Gang (Nervo and Knox, Bud Flanagan, Naughton and Gold)

Opera and Ballet

COVENT GARDEN (Cov. 1066) Evs. 7.0
OPERA SEASON

PALACE (Ger. 6834)
Evs. 7.30, Wed. 2.30, Sat. 5.15 & 8.30
BALLET ESPAGNOL DE PILAR LOPEZ

SADLER'S WELLS (Ter. 1672) Evs. 7.0
OPERA SEASON

LONDON PALLADIUM (Ger. 7373)
6.15 and 8.45 Mats. Sats. 2.40
NORMAN WISDOM
in the Gay New Revue
"PAINTING THE TOWN"
with **RUBY MURRAY**

HIPPODROME (Ger. 3272)
6.15-Twice Nightly-8.45
MAX BYGRAVES
and Great Company in The New Big Show
"MEET ME ON THE CORNER"

PRINCE OF WALES (Whi. 8681)
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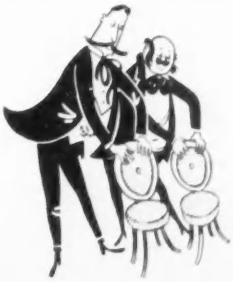

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